



United States Military Academy Band  
West Point, New York 10996



## Academy Clarinet Quartet

The Band's newest chamber group, the Academy Clarinet Quartet, was formed in September of 2002. In addition to performing standard works for the ensemble, they have branched out to create their own repertoire from music written for string quartet. They have already premiered a Mozart work. In 2003 they will add several more string works to the clarinet quartet literature. These arrangements have been masterfully crafted by the group's NCO-in-charge, SFC John Parrette. When the quartet is not busy expanding their repertoire, they take every opportunity to reach out and educate up and coming music students all over the tri-state area. They also perform a regular schedule of recitals both on and off West Point.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RACHEL GRASSO - CLARINET**, from Houston, Texas, came to the Military Academy Band in 1988. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Houston and a master's degree from Indiana University. SFC Grasso serves as the E flat clarinetist in the Concert Band. Additionally, she has been an adjunct professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz and a free-lance musician in the Hudson Valley.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JOHN PARRETTE - CLARINET**, received his Bachelor of Music degree with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music where he studied with Peter Hadcock. Originally from Kansas City, he began his studies with his father, who also served with the U.S. Military Academy Band. SFC Parrette has been with the Military Academy Band since 1987 and assumed the position of principal clarinetist in 1996. He has made numerous solo appearances with the band, including the 2001 North American premiere of Martin Ellerby's Clarinet Concerto. He has also performed many of his own arrangements with the band, including Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Sinfonia Concertante. SFC Parrette is a founding member of the Academy Wind Quintet and the Academy Clarinet Quartet.

**STAFF SERGEANT SAM KAESTNER - BASS CLARINET** was born in 1978 in Richmond, Virginia and began studying clarinet at age nine. At age 15 he began his private studies under clarinetist Marta Weldon of the Richmond Symphony. Kaestner attended the Peabody Conservatory, Johns Hopkins University where he received instruction from Baltimore Symphony bass clarinetist Edward Palanker, and Anthony Gigliotti, former Philadelphia Orchestra principal clarinetist. After his 2000 Peabody graduation (with honors), Kaestner went for graduate work at Northwestern University. His Northwestern

experience includes study with Chicago Symphony bass clarinetist, J. Lawrie Bloom, and finishing as a finalist in the graduate concerto competition. In 2002, Kaestner graduated with honors from Northwestern in 2002 with a Masters degree. In addition to his strength as a 'legit' clarinet virtuoso, Staff Sgt. Kaestner also enjoys playing jazz and gave that field great consideration before coming to West Point.

**STAFF SERGEANT SHAWN HERNDON - CLARINET**, arrived in August of 1998 from the 296th Army Band at Camp Zama, in Tokyo, Japan. A native of Dallas, Texas, he earned a bachelor's degree in clarinet performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas and a master's degree, also in performance, from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. His teachers have included Steve Girko, former principal clarinetist of the Dallas Symphony and Ronald deKant at the University of Cincinnati.